

History 3051: The Craft of the Historian

Fall Term, 2006

TR: 1800-1915

Building 51/1101

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- I The Craft of the Historian is a class designed to help history majors and future history teachers learn how to research and write history papers and to introduce students to history as an academic discipline. The course offers an intensive introduction to research skills and the principles and methods of historical analysis. Students will go through the process of researching and writing a lengthy research paper. Research papers will be based on an exhaustive examination of primary and secondary sources, some of which will be based on careful research on the web. In addition to learning about the process of gathering information, students will be introduced to the various approaches to historical analysis. A central part of this process is the ability to recognize and address historiographical interpretations. The course is designed to help students enhance critical reading and writing skills, as well as an understanding of the nature of historical inquiry.

It is important for students to remain in contact with me about their projects and consult with me individually throughout the term.

Grades will be based on class participation, two exams, three short papers, a research paper and an oral presentation. Grades will be determined along the following lines:

10% Class Participation and Attendance

10% Short Book Review

20% Oral Presentation, Bibliography and Précis

30% Papers One Through Three

30% Paper Four

****Note:** The plus-minus grading system will be used. Students who plagiarize or cheat in any way will earn an F for the course.

Goals:

Students who successfully complete the course will (1) improve both their verbal and written skills; (2) examine, question and explore the nature of history as a discipline; (3) through the careful examination of some of the most influential historians and historical schools, students will acquire a far more nuanced appreciation and understanding of the evolution of the discipline and how history (or our understanding of history) helps to shape our ideas of the past, the present, and the future.

II. **Required Books:**

Sandra Lauderdale Graham, *House and Street: The Domestic World of Servants and Masters in Nineteenth-Century Rio de Janeiro*.

E.H. Carr, *What is History?*

Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*.

Kate Turabian, *Manual for Writers*.

Blackboard Readings:

AHA Statement on Plagiarism

Few, Martha. "Chocolate, Sex, and Disorderly Women in Late-Seventeenth and Early-Eighteenth-Century Guatemala."

Stern, Steve J. "Paradigms of Conquest: History, Historiography, and Politics."

Tosh, John. "The Raw Materials."

Tosh, John. "Using the Sources."

Tosh, John. "The Themes of Mainstream History."

Tosh, John. "Writing and Interpretation."

You will also find on Blackboard five Book Reviews of *House and Street*

Jeffrey Needell's review in *The American Historical Review*

Rory Miller's review in *The English Historical Review*

Todd Diacon's review in the *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*

Sheldon Leslie Maram's review in *The Hispanic American Historical Review*

Joao Jose Reis review in the *Journal of Latin American Studies*

Course Schedule:

29 August: Introduction

31 August: What is History?

Readings:

1. Carr, pp. 3-35.

05 September: Library Orientation (Meet in Class)

07 September: Getting the Writing Right: Bibliography, Footnotes and Notetaking

Readings:

1. AHA Statement on Plagiarism (On Blackboard)

Bring Kate Turabian's *Manual for Writers* to class.

Course Schedule Cont'd:

12 September: Identifying Argument

Readings:

1. Few, Martha. "Chocolate, Sex, and Disorderly Women in Late-Seventeenth and Early-Eighteenth-Century Guatemala." (On Blackboard)

14 September: Discussion of *House and Street: The Domestic World of Servants and Masters in Nineteenth-Century Rio de Janeiro*. Our discussion will also address the five book reviews on Blackboard.

Short Book Review Due (10% of final grade)

19 September: Finding Sources

Readings:

1. Tosh, John. "The Raw Materials." (On Blackboard)

2. Tosh, John. "Using the Sources." (On Blackboard)

Student Presentations (1)

21 September: Writing and Interpretations

Readings:

1. Tosh, John. "Writing and Interpretation." (On Blackboard)

Student Presentations (1)

26 September: **Workshop One: Book Review Drafts Due**

28 September: Student Presentations (3)

Book Review Due

03 October: An Introduction to Historiography

Readings:

1. Carr, pp. 36-112

05 October: Causation and Progress

Readings:

1. Carr, pp. 113-end.

10 October: Recent Trends in Historical Writing

Readings:

1. Tosh, John. "The Themes of Mainstream History." (On Blackboard)

12 October: 1492: A Historiographical Overview

Readings:

1. Stern, Steve J. "Paradigms of Conquest: History, Historiography, and Politics."

17 October: Student Presentations (3)

Course Schedule Cont'd:

19 October: Student Presentations (3)

24 October: Workshop Two: **Critical Review Draft Due**

26 October: Student Presentations (3)

Critical Review Paper Due

31 October: Student Presentations (3)

02 November: Student Presentations (3)

07 November: Student Presentations (3)

09 November: Student Presentations (3)

14 November: **Workshop Three: Primary-Source Analysis Draft Due**

16 November: **Primary-Source Analysis Due**

Student Presentations (3)

21 November: Student Presentations (3)

23 November: No Class-Thanksgiving Holiday

28 November: Discussion of Michel-Rolph Trouillot's *Silencing the Past*.
Please read entire book and come to class prepared to discuss in detail.

30 November: Discussion of Michel-Rolph Trouillot's *Silencing the Past*.
Please read entire book and come to class prepared to discuss in detail.

05 December: **Workshop Four: Final Research Paper**

07 December: **Final Research Paper Due**

IV. Oral Presentations: Each student will be required to give a ten-minute oral presentation. In order to facilitate class discussion, students will provide a one-page (typed) précis of their topic. Students will also submit a detailed bibliography with at least twenty sources that will be consulted for the final paper. A minimum of five primary sources must be included. The précis and the bibliography are due one class before the oral presentation is given and students are asked to bring enough copies for all members of the class.

Some Suggested Topics for the Oral Presentation and Paper Four. Here students have the option of choosing from one of the topics listed below, or students may propose a different topic. All topics must be approved in advance by the instructor. Please consider your options carefully. Students are encouraged to focus on areas of interest. Please come see me for additional options or should you have any questions/concerns about your topic. This project requires extensive reading and you must allow yourself plenty of time to reflect.

Some Suggested Topics:

1. The historiography of 1492
2. The decision to drop atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki
3. The French Revolution (or the Mexican Revolution, Cuban, American...etc.)
4. The historiography of Slavery (numbers? Effects on Industrial Revolution? Did the west underdevelop Africa?)
5. The 'decline' of seventeenth-century Spain
6. The historiography of a famous historical figure such as Christopher Columbus, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Elizabeth I, or Louis XIV.
7. The Classic Maya Collapse
8. Historiography of Piracy
9. Historiography of the Civil War
10. The Frontier Thesis
11. The "Spiritual Conquest" of the New World
12. Roosevelt, the New Deal and the end of the Great Depression
13. The Origins of WWI or WWII
14. The historiography of witchcraft
15. The historiography of the Spanish Inquisition
16. The historiography of the Crusades
17. The Rigoberta Menchu controversy and the story of all poor Guatemalans.
18. The Weber Thesis
19. Myth(s) of the Spanish Conquest of the New World
20. Wars of Independence in Latin America
21. Yellow Journalism and the Spanish-American War

****THESE ARE ONLY SUGGESTED TOPICS****

Writing Workshops: During the class session before each paper is due, we will work together for the exchange of criticism and ideas. Participation is critical and requires each student's presentation of a substantial, typed draft for critique. Attendance and participation is mandatory. **One letter grade will be deducted from the paper's final grade for absence or lack of activity.**

V. Short Book Review: (Due 14 September)

Write a 600-750-word review of Sandra Lauderdale Graham's *House and Street: The Domestic World of Servants and Masters in Nineteenth-Century Rio de Janeiro*. Guidelines will be given in class.

VI. Papers: All papers must be typed, double-spaced, with proper documentation, footnotes, and bibliography (Chicago Style). They must be the length assigned with normal margins and in normal-sized font. **Late papers will not be accepted.**

Paper One: *Scholarly Book Review*-Draft due 26 September; final version due 28 September.

Choose a recent monograph pertaining to your research topic. In no more than four pages, write a scholarly review of the book. Your review should include a brief overview of the content, outlining the author's thesis and the evidence used to support his/her conclusions. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments? What does the book contribute to our understanding of the topic? Are the arguments convincing? Explain.

Locate a historian's review of your book in a scholarly journal and attach a photocopy of it to your final paper.

Paper Two: *Critical Review*-Draft due 24 October; final version due 26 October
Choose two scholarly articles related to your topic. One of the articles must have been written before 1960 and the other after 1985; but both articles must deal with the same topic or theme. The assignment is to write a four-page critical review of the two articles. Remember, a critical review is NOT simply a summary of the articles. It is crucial to evaluate the thesis of each article. Are they different? If so, how? Why? Is the difference based on the use of sources? How do the arguments differ? How is the material presented? What kinds of questions is each historian trying to answer? Which article is more convincing and why?

The library staff has drafted a handout to assist students with this assignment. The assignment is a difficult one, and students should expect to spend considerable time in the library searching for appropriate articles. However, do not panic. We shall spend time in class discussing research techniques that will assist you with this assignment.

Paper Three: *Primary-Source Analysis*-Draft Due 14 November; final version due 16 November

Write a four-page critique of the primary sources you plan to use in your final paper. You may consider the following questions to help guide your analysis:

1. Why does the source exist?
2. When was it created?
3. For whom was it intended? And with what purpose(s)?
4. Is the source trustworthy? If so, why? If not, why?
5. Are there any notable *silences*?

Paper Four: *Final Research Paper*-Draft due 05 December; final version due 07 December

In no more than fifteen pages (and no fewer than twelve), write a research paper on one of topics listed above in section III. The paper must be based on both primary and secondary sources, and it must reflect an understanding of the historiography of the topic.